

# BURNING BUSH

LOUIS UNTERMAYER



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BURNING BUSH



*Books by Louis Untermeyer*

POETRY

ROAST LEVIATHAN

CHALLENGE

THE NEW ADAM

THESE TIMES

BURNING BUSH

PARODIES

INCLUDING HORACE

—AND OTHER POETS

HEAVENS

COLLECTED PARODIES

TALES

THE FAT OF THE CAT

AND OTHER STORIES

ESSAYS

AMERICAN POETRY SINCE 1900

THE FORMS OF POETRY

CRITICAL COLLECTIONS

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

MODERN BRITISH POETRY

THIS SINGING WORLD

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

POEMS OF HEINRICH HEINE







LOUIS UNTERMAYER

BURNING  
BUSH

NEW YORK

HARCOURT, BRACE & COMPANY

1928

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.N76B8  
1928

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FOR ALL THAT IS  
RICHARD



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## UNREASONING HEART





## LONG FEUD

Where, without bloodshed, can there be  
A more relentless enmity  
Than the long feud fought silently

Between man and the growing grass.  
Man's the aggressor, for he has  
Weapons to humble and harass

The impudent spears that charge upon  
His sacred privacy of lawn.  
He mows them down, and they are gone

Only to lie in wait, although  
He builds above and digs below  
Where never a root would dare to go.

His are the triumphs till the day  
There's no more grass to cut away,  
And, weary of labor, weary of play,

Having exhausted every whim,  
He stretches out each conquering limb.  
And then the small grass covers him.

## THE DARK CHAMBER

The brain forgets but the blood will remember.  
There, when the play of sense is over,  
The last, low spark in the darkest chamber  
Will hold all there is of love and lover.

The war of words, the life-long quarrel  
Of self against self will resolve into nothing;  
Less than the chain of berry-red coral  
Crying against the dead black of her clothing.

What has the brain that it hopes to last longer?  
The blood will take from forgotten violence,  
The groping, the break of her voice in anger.  
There will be left only color and silence.

These will remain, these will go searching  
Your veins for life when the flame of life smolders;  
The night that you two saw the mountains marching  
Up against dawn with the stars on their shoulders;

The jetting poplars' arrested fountains  
As you drew her under them, easing her pain;  
The notes, not the words, of a half-finished sentence;  
The music, the silence. . . . These will remain.

## SEA-GULL

Strong-winged bird, the one thing free and certain  
In a waste of dubious water, buoyed up by nothing but air;  
Long, slow curve, deliberate in your parting  
Of mist from layers of mist, as though your pilgrimage  
were

Far, far off, in a world where space has no meaning  
And the port is unknown and the sun has forgotten to  
rise—

On, on, you fly, nor faltering, nor straining;  
Pitting your blunt white arrow against the grim bulk of  
the skies.

Night meets night, but blackness is not a barrier,  
Only another element to trust the body to.  
Strong-winged bird, whose atmosphere is terror,  
My eyes—and only my eyes—can follow where you flew.

## YET NOTHING LESS

This is the top. Here we can only go  
Back to the world, that Lilliput below;  
A child's toy village scattered in the snow.

What have we come for then? This scornful height  
Scarce moved an inch to meet us. Black and white  
Seem colder still in this ash-ivory light.

What saves these frozen trees from coming out  
And waving threatening arms as though in doubt  
Of what it is that we have come about?

What gives these common curves, these hills that part  
As casually as schoolboys, power to start  
Cries from the lips and tears within the heart?

Nothing so much, perhaps, yet nothing less  
Than that which wintry earth knows to express:  
Love that no longer lives on loveliness.

## ANY SUNSET

There's something about the going down of the sun,  
Whether it makes a bonfire of a cloud,  
Or, too obscure and lonely to be proud,  
Sinks on the nearest rooftop, and is gone.  
There's something, not of color nor of size,  
In the mere going, in the calm descent,  
Half out of heaven and half imminent;  
Final, as though it never again would rise.

There's something in its very noiselessness,  
Unlike mad waters or the winds that shout  
Their end in one last agony of excess;  
Something that does not count its days nor deeds,  
But trusts itself to darkness and goes out  
And finds whatever after-life it needs.

## UNREASONING HEART

Here in a world whose heaven is powder-white,  
Where, cased in glass, the branches bear a weight  
Too light for leaves and far too cold for flowers,  
Nothing disturbs these alabaster floors.  
The black stream does not move; it is a vein  
Of onyx cropping out, a metal vine  
Twisted and thrown away. There is no sound.  
Blankets of snow, curtains of snow-flake sand  
Bury the footsteps of the one man here.  
Here, where the world has died, away from her,  
Here for the fevered mind too long harassed  
Is wintry silence, cooling space and rest.  
Waves of a soundless music rise to lift  
The unburied thing that lived and even laughed.  
And, as a broken life can be made whole  
By looking at the slant of one long hill,  
In this eternity of peace, the heart  
Forgetting all forgets that it can hurt.

And yet, does even the weariest heart want peace?  
Back to the fever, the intemperate pace,  
Back to the ruthless word, the headlong deed  
(Fearing that passion stilled is passion dead)  
The worn heart hungers. Forever unappeased,  
Forever self-persuaded, self-opposed,  
It turns away from each escape, to pine  
For the old wars and victories of pain;



Embracing all that reason hopes to leave,  
With no less hurt and even greater love.  
As though to cry, " Here I belong—I must!  
Here is the place where I have suffered most."

## THE DEBATE

### HEAD :

And is this all? After the sundering  
Of earth and heavens scattered everyway,  
Only the voice of chaos: a lost thundering  
That has no word to say?

Only the empty flesh, the hollow cinder  
Dreaming of consummation, remembering flame?  
Only defeat, only the forced surrender  
Of reason in your name?

Only the gasp, the desperate invocation  
Of a ghost, of an unseen idol, a chink in the wall?  
A torch that burns with a deliberate passion  
For darkness. And is that all?

And nothing left but doubt? Only the violent  
Question that raises nothing, not even a clod?

### HEART :

Be silent, head. Look back of the body. Be silent  
And know that I am God.

## SCARCELY SPRING

Nothing is real. The world has lost its edges;  
The sky, uncovered, is the one thing clear.  
The earth is little more than atmosphere  
Where yesterday were rocks and naked ridges.  
Nothing is fixed. Tentative rain dislodges  
Green upon green or lifts a coral spear  
That breaks in blossom, and the hills appear  
Too frail to be the stony fruit of ages.

Nothing will keep. Even the heavens waver.  
Young larks, whose first thought is to cry aloud,  
Have spent their bubble notes. And here or there  
A few slow-hearted boys and girls discover  
A moon as insubstantial as a cloud  
Painted by air on washed and watery air.

## ALPINE

Man is the wonder. Baffled but undefeated,  
He puts his mark however earth may slope.  
Landslides plow under him. He is unseated,  
Only to grope

Up the same scarps and gullies that betrayed him  
Where rock still moves and struggles against rock;  
A slipping foothold is enough to aid him.  
Though wild goats mock

His long persistence, and his seed is granted  
No ground but granite on the dizziest shelf,  
There, where no brighter blossom can be planted,  
He plants himself.

## BURNING BUSH

And suddenly the flowing night stands still  
And the loose air grows tense and small;  
Runners of flame from nowhere rise and fill  
The narrowest veins, till all

The martyrdom of fire is not enough  
For bodies eager to be doomed;  
Burning in one long agony of love,  
Burning but not consumed.

And the last white blaze leaps from our being's core  
And flesh, too shaken to rejoice,  
Cries out till quiet, vaster than before,  
Speaks in the still, small voice.

## TO A TELEGRAPH POLE

You should be done with blossoming by now.  
Yet here are leaves closer than any bough  
That welcomes ivy. True, you were a tree  
And stood with others in a marching line,  
Less regular than this, of spruce and pine  
And boasted branches rather than a trunk.  
This is your final winter, all arms shrunk  
To one cross-bar bearing haphazardly  
Four rusty strands. You cannot hope to feel  
The electric sap run through those veins of steel.  
The birds know this; the birds have hoodwinked you,  
Crowding about you as they used to do.  
The rainy robins huddled on your wire  
And those black birds with shoulders dipped in fire  
Have made you dream these vines; these tendrils are  
A last despair in green, familiar  
To derelicts of earth as well as sea.  
Do not believe them, there is mockery  
In their cool little jets of song. They know  
What everyone but you learned long ago:  
The stream of stories humming through your head  
Is not your own. You dream. But you are dead.



## THE STONE'S HYMN

Earthquakes prepared me, made my bed;  
    Worlds rose within me, fell apart.  
Now small lives move beneath and overhead,  
    While unseen heavens open in my heart.

Beyond extremities of pain,  
    I touch the very source of might.  
Do I not drink the warm, impersonal rain,  
    Feed on the lavish and indifferent light?

Here, in a permanent peace, I lie  
    Till finity and all its shapes are done;  
And sorrow is an air that passes by  
    And death a little absence of the sun.

Content to wait while kingdoms crack  
    And men conspire and planets climb,  
I know no fear, no weariness, no lack,  
    Who have eternity instead of time.

## QUESTION

Now what are you that, lacking you, this earth  
Is but a lathe and plaster world, a lie  
Of crumpled color on a canvas sky,  
A winter-field, a home without a hearth?  
Now what are you, indeed, that when you pass  
Night is but twelve dark hours that none can praise,  
And April is a month with thirty days,  
And the first green is only so much grass?

And where are you, the heart cries loudest, where?  
Where? And what power intangible, inert  
Keeps you, in walls of air, so long, so still?  
Come back! Come back! Or will you not repair  
These sticks of earth, these broken days, until  
The heart does not remember why it hurt?

## ORIOLE

Suddenly earth grew whole.  
I saw your soul  
Rise with that oriole

Whose flame of passing stirred  
Something no bird  
Had ever seen or heard.

Something no ears nor eyes  
Could quite surprise  
Nor feathered fire disguise.

But whose clean color spoke  
In light that woke  
Laughter from deadened oak

And life from blackened fern,  
Making things turn  
To blaze that could not burn.

While every spark that flew  
Took root and grew,  
Leaf, stem and branch, like you

Altered, yet with the same  
Power to frame  
Green fire and golden flame.

## THE WOODPECKER

In the world there were but two—  
    She the sleeper, I the waker—  
When upon our roof there flew  
    An imperative woodpecker.

“ What is that and who is there? ”  
    Cried my doubly dearest, waking.  
“ We are far and guests are rare  
    And no stranger comes a-knocking.”

Then I answered, “ It may well  
    Be the day of doom that wants us,  
And perhaps it's Gabriel  
    Making up an early census.”

Then she laughed, “ Belovèd, say,  
    If he asks, I am not ready.”  
And the summoner flew away,  
    And sleep took my tired lady.

I slept, too, though I could see  
    A smaller house, a larger acre,  
Where, one morning, we would be:  
    I the sleeper, she the waker.

## BUSINESS OF RAVENS

What are these ravens doing in our trees,  
Calling on doom and outworn prophecies?  
Flying in threes

Their sinister shadow, their funereal wing  
Blots the fresh color out of everything.  
They do not sing

Nor shake their throats like all the other birds;  
But, in dry monotones or broken thirds,  
Their crooked words

Cowardly and contemptuous are thrown  
At scarecrows who, with business of their own,  
Let them alone.

## TEAM OF OXEN

This is earth moving, earth that learned to crawl  
Along the glacial wall;  
Boulders that rose in their deliberate way  
From the raw clay.

Not eagerly, nor yet prepared to know  
Where they are meant to go,  
The damp soil dropping from their sides, they move  
In an uncertain groove

Thickly, but pressing on as though their bones  
Still feel the push of stones,  
And fear to rest themselves lest they remain  
Dead earth again.

## DOG AT NIGHT

At first he stirs uneasily in sleep  
And, since the moon does not run off, unfolds  
Protesting paws. Grumbling that he must keep  
Both eyes awake, he whimpers; then he scolds  
And, rising to his feet, demands to know  
The stranger's business. You who break the dark  
With insolent light, who are you? Where do you go?  
But nothing answers his indignant bark.  
The moon ignores him, walking on as though  
Dogs never were. Stiffened to fury now,  
His small hairs stand upright, his howls come fast,  
And terrible to hear is the bow-wow  
That tears the night. Stirred by this bugle-blast,  
The farmer's bitch grows active; without pause  
Summons her mastiff and the hound that lies  
Three fields away to rally to the cause.  
And the next county wakes. And miles beyond  
Throats tear themselves and brassy lungs respond  
With threats, entreaties, bellowings and cries,  
Chasing the white intruder down the skies.

## COAL FIRE IN THE NURSERY

And once, in some swamp-forest, these,  
My child, were trees.  
Before the first fox thought to run,  
These dead black chips were one  
Green net to hold the sun  
Each leaf in turn was taught the right  
Way to drink light;  
The twigs were made to learn  
How to catch flame and yet not burn;  
Branch and then bough began to eat  
Their diet of heat.  
And so for years, six million years (or higher)  
They held that fire.

And here, out of the splinters that remain,  
The fire is loose again.  
See how its little hands reach here and there,  
Finger the air;  
Then, growing bolder, twisting free,  
It fastens on the remnants of the tree  
And, one by one,  
Consumes them, mounts beyond them, leaps, is done,  
And goes back to the sun.



## CHILD DIGGING

*Why do we dig?* We neither think nor care.  
Since the first child in the world's babyhood  
Buried its fist in sand and found it good,  
Scratchers of earth are busy everywhere.  
A hole is wonderful; it lets you know  
The secrets of a world that lie below  
And come up piecemeal: shells that used to fly  
On windy currents in a watery sky,  
Red pebbles that were jewels long ago,  
A prickly star, a barnacle, old wood  
Smelling of pitch and pirates who may be  
Walking the coral jungles of the sea.  
*How do we dig?* As every builder should:  
With stick or stone or anything that's planned  
For scooping clay—the engine of our hand  
Is mightier than any dynamo.  
*Where are we digging?* To some buried land  
Where soil is softer and our tunnels grow  
Into a cave long as infinity.  
Perhaps we'll dig the round world through and through;  
Perhaps to Hindustan or Araby;  
Perhaps to China. . . . What? What puzzles you?  
Where are the Chinese children digging to?  
Let us alone. We have our work to do.

## DISENCHANTMENT

Here is the German  
    Fairy forest;  
And here I turn in,  
    I, the poorest  
Son of an aging  
    Humble widow.  
The light is fading;  
    Every shadow  
Conceals a kobold,  
    A gnome's dark eye,  
Or even some troubled  
    Lorelei.  
A ruined castle  
    Invites me to prowl;  
Its only vassal  
    A frightened owl  
(Most likely a princess  
    Under a spell)—  
And what light dances  
    Behind that well?  
Perhaps great riches  
    Are hidden there,  
Perhaps a witch's  
    Magic snare.  
I walk up boldly,  
    Though my breath falters;  
But no one holds me,

Nothing alters  
Except the dying  
Phosphorescence  
Where the rocks lie in  
Broken crescents.  
These rocks are haunted  
Everyone says,  
And here the enchanted  
Dragon obeys  
Only the youngest  
Son of a widow  
Who waits the longest,  
Fearing no shadow  
Of any uncommon  
Phantom in metal,  
But dares to summon  
The Thing to battle.  
I've said my vespers,  
I've tightened my gloves;  
The forest whispers  
And chuckles and moves.  
Darker and closer  
The stillness surges—  
Not even the ghost of  
A rabbit emerges.  
I rattle my weapons,  
I call and I call  
But nothing happens,  
Nothing at all.

Nothing at all.

## VARIATIONS ON A CHILD'S GAME

Water, water, wine-flower  
Growing up so high;  
We are all young ladies  
And all of us must die.

We are all young ladies  
Walking in the sun;  
Soon there will be none of us  
For him to shine upon.

Comes a prince to choose a bride  
Never comes in vain.  
Turn about and turn about  
And turn about again.

Comes a prince from Faraway  
Never speaks a word;  
One hand holds the other hand  
Like a dead bird.

His horse's bones are ivory,  
Ebony and gold;  
He will carry one of us  
Who never will be old.

He will name the one he loves,  
Take her to his side,  
Touch her on the brow, and she  
Will have to be his bride.

*Water, water, wine-flower,  
Growing up so high;  
We are all young ladies  
And all of us must die.*

## BOY INTO FAUN

If I were a satyr,  
Reshaped and reborn,  
I'd put out goat-feet,  
I'd put out a horn.

I'd stamp on the rock;  
I'd charge at the oak;  
I'd swing on a branch  
Till it shivered and broke.

I'd try to lock horns  
With the oncoming mist,  
And I'd whimper because  
It wouldn't resist.

I'd think of the wildest  
Games to play.  
I'd ring all the church-bells  
And run away. . . .

I'd go back to the world.  
But sometimes at dawn  
I'd put out goat-feet,  
Return to the faun.

## AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL

Something befell  
Young Adam Hope  
Who had a well  
For a telescope.

In which the stars  
Came crystal-clear,  
Brighter than Mars  
Or Jupiter,

Till Adam scarcely  
Looked at the sky,  
Strewn so sparsely,  
Stretched so high.

Night after night,  
The neighbors tell,  
He put out the light,  
He stole to the well.

To that dark funnel  
He came to pray,  
"If only the sun'll  
Stay away,

"And nothing occurs  
Until I finish,  
One of those stars  
Will forget to vanish.

“ And when that late one  
Loafs and lingers,  
I'll catch a great one  
With my fingers.”

Adam's aim  
Grew fixed and stronger.  
Then one night came  
That lasted longer

Than nights should last  
By natural law;  
And when it passed  
The neighbors saw

Something that glistened  
Deep in the well.  
They looked; they listened  
They could not tell

The tale's conclusion.  
At the end of the rope  
Was it Truth, or Illusion,  
Or Adam Hope?



## FARM SAYING

Wind from the East  
Will trouble you least.

Wind from the North  
Will trumpet "Go forth!"

Wind from the South  
Will leave you in drouth.

Wind from the West  
Will put you to rest.

## PUFF-BALLS

"This patch," they cried, "will yield  
No better crop than stone."  
And so they left the field  
To mullein and the moon.

Its useless brook had dried,  
Scorned even by the crow;  
But when the mullein died  
The moon began to plow.

He planted all his beams  
Deep in a loamy ledge;  
Then turned to simpler schemes  
More suited to his age.

Still careless of neglect,  
The seeds remembered him.  
They pushed; they stood erect;  
First in a disk of flame,

Then, in their sturdy right,  
A host of ragged suns,  
And last, those balls of light  
More delicate than the moon's.

But still they were ignored,  
Waiting from dusk to day,  
As though the moon deplored  
His natural progeny

Who, high above despair,  
    Strained to rejoin the moon  
Sliding through venturous air. . . .

One morning they were gone.

## BERKSHIRE OCTOBER

“ This is an avenue of gold  
Impervious to rain and rust,  
Where sunlight is a yellow dust  
Too fine for all but leaves to hold;  
When even the rocks return to mold,  
These will resist Time's gradual thrust.”  
So we declared. And then a gust  
From some far world blew suddenly cold.

The gold that powdered every tree  
Was lightly loosened, flake by flake.  
We watched the wind's sharp fingers take  
Leaf after leaf deliberately.  
Murder was out; death was awake.  
There was no more we cared to see.

## PATHETIC FALLACY

Where is the scholar  
Who knows how  
The first wild poem  
Grew on a bough?

Not the pert goldfinch  
For all he can say,  
Nor the loud phœbe  
Of almost May.

Least of all the catbird,  
Whose clever tone  
Repeats every wisdom  
Except his own.

This much is certain:  
Once in a wood  
I was stopped by a young, white  
Sisterhood.

I stared till my eyes were  
Too dazed to be focused.  
Was this tree a virgin  
Changed to a locust?

Or dense wistaria  
At half-moon rise  
Clustered in swarms of  
Butterflies?

They published themselves  
For the casual few;  
Yet the more I observed  
The less I knew. '

So I ask the scholars  
If they know how  
To read a wild poem  
Hung on a bough?

## SENTIMENTAL WIND

The wind among our trees  
Is like no other wind.  
Our birches, small and silver-skinned,  
Maples and poplars—all of these  
Translate in every rising note his little differences.

Contentment or despair?  
And is the grief his own?  
The watery words remain unknown,  
Though every leaf reveals his snare  
Of promising portentous things that end in thinning air.

Or is it just his play?  
Or has he chanced to find  
Something we may have left behind  
And quite forgotten on the way,  
Which he alone remembers but has never learned to say.

## BIRTHDAY

I have nothing to give you  
To remember me by  
But the thought of a mountain  
And a broken sky.

And the laugh that a waterfall  
Made in the dark,  
And the jargon of finches  
That mimicked a lark.

And a road we discovered,  
An unearthly hush,  
And a dream that is rooted  
In more than your flesh. . .

Some night you'll remember  
And say, half asleep,  
"He gave me no gift  
But a mountain to keep."



## RAINBOW'S END

“ Do you remember at the rainbow's end  
Those flowers trampled by the hurrying rain,  
Hanging their heads, knowing they would not spend  
Their prodigal colors again?

“ Hanging their heads, you laughed, afraid to stare  
Back at the boundless apathy of blue.  
While arched above them in prismatic air  
Their seven colors grew.

“ And then, do you remember how you said  
That every flower beaten to the ground  
Blossoms in beds of light, and shook your head,  
Half playful, half profound?

“ And stooped and picked two petals suddenly  
And let them fall—do you remember—so . . . ? ”  
I have forgotten. “ And how you answered me?  
How all the heaven flamed. . . Remember? ” No.

## OBITUARY

There was the world that Jackson always found  
In sleep, a heaven of crime and lusty vices,  
Where, swaggering in various disguises,  
He killed, he conquered, and was always crowned.  
And then there was the world where he was downed  
By every small delay and hourly crisis;  
A niggling world of customers and prices,  
And reckoning the pennies to the pound.

Now who shall toll the bell for Jackson Parke  
Who never lived his dream, nor here nor there.  
Surely no demon of the outer dark,  
For Jackson nightly offered up his prayer.  
And who on earth will ever heed a clerk  
Dangling, twixt heaven and hell, in pitiless air.

## PETER PUTTER

They called him Peter Putter from the way  
He had of doing nothing with the air  
Of straightening up the universe. Somewhere  
In youth a fortune fell on him. They say  
His house with forty rooms above the bay,  
"Built upon slipping sand," was the despair  
And byword of the villagers. And there  
Cleveland once stopped to pass the time of day.

Now Peter trims and tamps and mends the stairs  
And pulls the burdock from his weedy lawn;  
Content to come where any hole has gone,  
Holding off time with pruning-shears and prayers.  
And while he struggles with his small repairs,  
The large decays eat unconcernedly on.

## PUPIL OF LEIBNITZ

All of the teachers he had ever known,  
All of the volumes given him to read  
Taught him to smile. Smiling became his creed.  
“ Weep,” they assured him, “ and you weep alone.”  
So, with determined practice, he had grown  
A mask to serve him in the hour of need  
Against a world of bitterness and greed  
Where hatred was engendered in the bone.

The hour never came. The world forgot  
Himself and his pretensions, even while  
He smashed his former gods, and grimly sought  
Expressions that could wither and revile.  
But no; it was too late. Leibnitz could not  
Remove the mask that carved him to a smile.

## MIDSUMMER SANITY

Leave me. The water that mumbles and drones in my  
ears,

To you is a laughter running its golden trebles;  
For you the flood of night which confuses my fears  
Is only a blue stream washing a skyful of pebbles.

Our lips meet. But there is no union—not even in dreams.  
Deaf to the arrogant pulses, you hear nothing rude;  
You hold your hands out to the fire because of the gleams;  
Walking the world like a princess at home in her fairy  
wood.

There will be nothing, not even a trumpet, to shake you;  
The walls of your castle will fall to the sigh of a flute.  
The prince, in white satin, will always be coming to wake  
you;  
For you there will only be beauty divorced from the  
brute.

Here, with your round, boyish head on my shoulder, it  
seems

That glow-worms can really be diamonds and every  
bright fly is a star.

Leave me—the fruit of my knowledge is less than your  
dreams.

My mind has been poisoned with truth. Oh, remain  
as you are.

## ORDINARY MIRACLE

The baffled demons of our passion bore  
Down in a clap of storm upon the beach.  
Blood against blood had battled in our speech  
As cruelly as only love can war.  
Slashing with worse than swords, our anger tore  
Through every cranny that its hate could reach,  
Hurling its ugly blasphemies to breach  
The last, white wall, the barred and secret door.

Silence came with the sunset. Suddenly  
Our anger crumpled as the clouds gave way  
Before a light that melted earth and sea  
Into each other. Wordless, your hand lay  
Healing in mine, asking no words of me.  
The earth had spoken. There was no more to say.

## MAD PROPOSAL

Dare to be a bather  
Where the sea is black;  
Come and tear your hands to gather  
Rue upon the rock.

Where a red sun harries  
All it burns upon,  
We shall eat the bitter berries  
Poisoned by the moon.

Some have all the highland's  
Laughing fortitude;  
We have but the evil silence  
Heard in hostile woods.

Not for us the safer  
Roadway cut and cleared;  
Lost in bogs, we plunge to braver  
Paths where none has dared.

For our body's fever  
No cool river runs,  
We shall seek no bread while ever  
In this world are stones.

Stones to feed our hunger,  
Stones to make our bed;  
These I offer, these last longer  
Than our earthly need.

Turn from peace, the barren  
Over-sweetened hearth,  
Come with me and taste the iron  
Malice of the earth.

Rise and leave your father;  
Never dare look back.  
Come and break your heart to gather  
Rue upon the rock.



## THE DREAM AND THE BLOOD

Go back, dark blood, to the springs from which you came.

Go back, though each mutinous drop swells upward in  
flood.

What! Am I nothing more now than a wave of onrushing  
flame?

Nothing but sport of my pulse? Back, back, dark blood!

Am I not master here in my own house of flesh?

Cease roaring and rising. Be still, I tell you, be still.

I have work that calls for cool evenings; I have stuff of the  
mind to thresh.

Must you pit your unreasoning hunger against my de-  
terminate will?

I tell you this body for which we are always contending

Is more than mere fuel for you to be turned into ash.

It was shaped by white visions of leaving its bones, of  
extending

Itself into realms where your heat would be less than a  
flash.

What! Will you not even listen? I hear you, O hater

Of all that I plan. I hear how the thud

In my veins beats your victory. . . . Later, then, later.

Give me myself for an hour. Go back, dark blood.

## AFTER

Here are the properties: a cankered rose  
    With rust, like stains of blood upon its petals;  
A thin, smooth-beaten moon; a wind that blows  
    Only to spread the brunt of hopeless battles;

A wisp of early snow; a doubtful star,  
    Swift in its rise and swifter in its setting—  
These are my funeral harmonies, these are  
    The pitch of loss, the accent of forgetting.

What mockery their music is to me,  
    Crying for what not even the mind remembers.  
My spirit is not autumn's. Let me be  
    Tortured with living fire, not its embers.

There was a forest blazing in the sun,  
    Through which we laughed and ran, your dark hair  
    waving. . .  
But what is that to us? What's done is done.  
    Leave the dead clay. It is not worth the having.

## NIGHTMARE BY DAY

There was no track  
In the new snow.  
Where could I go  
Except go back  
Where, row on row,  
The trees stood black.

This, then, was peace.  
Yet something said no.  
Something below  
The whispering trees  
Made the warm flow  
In my pulses freeze.

From where I stood,  
Ten yards or so  
Into the wood,  
I watched it grow—  
A trail of blood  
Deep in the snow.

Nothing to show  
Where it began.  
No trace of man;  
No other foe  
More deadly than  
One chuckling crow. . .

What was this dream?  
I do not know.  
But still I seem  
To wait for the blow  
And the red stream  
Upon the snow.

## AUTUMN DIALOGUE

"No, no," she cries, "I will not warm my fingers  
At these charred sticks you long to huddle over.  
Wait, if you like, to see if a spark still lingers;  
I know the sort of ash you will discover."

"But look," he urges, "you who love to number  
The gradual harmonies of dying color.  
Have you no joy in such pale gold and amber?  
Does gray mean nothing more to you now than dolor?"

"No, no," she answered, "it is you who relish  
This dwindling death; you like to feel the smolder  
Creep into words which, while you scrape and polish,  
Make the thin air about us even colder."

Then he, "And what are yours but words that crumple  
Their borrowed colors like those clouds at sunset  
Which seemed more fixed than any earthly temple,  
Yet turned to smoke before the first dark onset."

A stone grinds under her heel. He does not hold her.  
The twig she snaps falls with a flaking of rust.  
The moon shows an edge like the curve of a dead girl's  
shoulder;  
And earth continues to fondle its acre of dust.

## ONE VOICE

This is your hour. Plum and freesia  
Wait till you speak for them. The light  
Grows sultry, and a breath of Asia  
Sharpens the May-soft night.

Over the centuries of slaughter  
The breath moves, bearing fitfully,  
Along a waste of bitter water  
Unsweetened by a tree,

The ageless cry of Jewish women  
Too steeped in suffering to be shrill,  
Mixed with a laugh that fear and famine  
Tortured but could not kill.

Now the air turns. A dark wind tramples  
The singing dust until a voice  
Calls on the stones of buried temples  
To answer and rejoice.

The music falters; hate in armor  
Beats black drums on a copper sky.  
Death rides over the shaken murmur  
While its last echoes die.

But still the one voice triumphs, stronger  
Than all the suffering it endures.  
It is a lost world's homeward hunger,  
And it is yours.

## ESSAY ON MAN

Man longs to be merry,  
Though seldom elated.  
Two bites of a cherry—  
His hunger is sated.  
A fugitive pleasure  
Discloses what sin is.  
Repentance at leisure. . .  
And then comes finis.

## GLAD DAY

*(After a Color Print by Blake)*

Come day, glad day, day running out of the night  
With breast aflame and your generous arms outspread;  
With hands that scatter the dawn and fingers busy with  
light,  
And a rainbow of fire to flicker about your head.

Come soon, glad day, come with the confident stride  
Of the sun in its march over mountains, of the wind on  
its way through the air;  
Naked and noble and new, throwing the darkness aside;  
Come, with your gesture of space, and the heavens loosed  
in your hair.

For the waiting is lifeless, and dawn is a lingering doubt,  
And our feet are confused in shadows that tangle and  
rend.  
Come day, glad day, come with a wordless shout;  
Clean with rejoicing, complete in outgiving, come day  
without end.



## LOCAL HABITATIONS



## COUNTRY EVENING

This is the time when birds no longer cry  
Haphazardly and high,  
Nor dot the rails nor punctuate the trees  
In swift apostrophes.  
This is the time day hesitates, as though  
It almost feared to go,  
And the great span that promised to remain  
Goes back into thin rain.  
And, doubtful of itself, night throws one spark  
To blaze the trail of dark;  
And earth gives off cool breaths, green-growing smells,  
And something else  
That lingers between light and atmosphere;  
And the third star swings clear.  
This is the hour for lamps; this is the time  
For the slow, homeward climb.

## POSITANO

Someone weary of the styles  
Architects must master,  
Someone with a box of tiles  
And a pinch of plaster,

Some one who could never down  
The mad child in the poet,  
Took his toys and built a town  
Whimsical, inchoate.

Like the prows of gaudy skiffs  
Roofs were tossed; he ran his  
Houses up impossible cliffs  
And the craziest crannies.

Piled the town upon itself  
With a touch of mockery,  
Till it seemed like shelf on shelf  
Of peasant crockery.

Roads to slip uphill he bent  
Rapidly in slow air,  
Roads that crossed themselves, and went  
Neatly into nowhere.

Here a gate and there a wall,  
A church without a steeple;  
Then, the maddest touch of all,  
He put in the people.

Seven hundred years ago—  
Tragic necromancy—  
How could these poor creatures know  
They were just his fancy.

They began to love and cheat,  
Set up schools and utter  
Platitudes in every street,  
Trade in bread and butter. . . .

Still the porcelain people go  
Gravely self-deceiving;  
Still they walk the earth as though  
They were really living.

## PAESTUM

Here where the Roman heel uprooted,  
The lawless rose that grew too free,  
The Saracen swept down and looted  
Temple and town impartially.

Hundreds of years it watched, unharried,  
The moss at work, lizards at play,  
Till Robert Guiscard came and carried  
All that a man can carry away.

All—save some yellow, fungus-eaten  
Columns too scarred by sun and sand.  
Intent on stone less weather-beaten,  
These he contemptuously let stand.

And still they stand, these blocks that no man  
Disturbed through thieving centuries;  
Stones that, forgetting Turk and Roman,  
Remember only what it is

That rears upon the earth a purity  
Hands cannot raze nor mind make less:  
The abstract form which finds security  
Perfect in time and timelessness.

## LITTLE VESUVIUS

What were we sure of? Earth? It heaved and bubbled  
While the sea was an empty pavement of stone;  
And the feet of the wind on the water troubled  
Only the heart too lightly blown.

What did we trust? The stars? They shook and guttered  
In vacant air that suddenly let one fall.  
And our thoughts, the things most trusted, the easiest  
scattered,  
Could not even rest in the mind that had fixed them all.

## HIGH MASS AT ST. PETER'S

While the scarlet runs to song  
And the twelve-foot candle drips,  
Sculptured popes regard the throng  
Stonily with half-curved lips.

And the ritual is a whirl  
Of barbarian brocade  
In a wilderness of pearl,  
Lapis lazuli and jade;

And the living flowers are tossed  
Innocently out of place;  
And the skirted priests are lost  
In a fine-edged sea of lace;

And Saint Peter, bronze and gold,  
High above the lesser thrones,  
Sits in marble, aureoled  
In a blaze of precious stones.

. . . . .

Peter cast his net and drew  
The guide lines straight.  
The day was gone, the fish were few,  
The need was great.

Peter heard a voice that lets  
No man be.  
Peter rose and left his nets  
At Galilee.



## IN THE MAMERTINE PRISON

(II *Timothy* 4:6-7)

And all night long the wild beasts roared behind him,  
And, daily, he could hear the long applause  
Of wilder beasts whose pleasure had consigned him  
To Rome's convenient laws.

A year shrugged by. The applauding world was Nero's;  
The prisoner's world remained unlistening stones.  
His body, never shaped to be a hero's,  
Bent down upon its bones.

Two years. Disciples turned away. He suffered  
Doubt that was even colder than neglect.  
He waited. He was ready to be offered.  
He wrote. He stood erect. . . .

And Nero, longing for an hour's resistance  
Entered the Circus, talkative and light.  
"What food for lions! Bah! These spineless Christians.  
Not one of them will fight."

## DOOMSDAY AT WEGGIS

When Gabriel came to Weggis that last morning  
They thought it was the postman with the papers,  
And no one noticed him and his forewarning  
Except old Franz who, friendlier than the neighbors,  
Hailed him with "Grüss Gott" and resumed his plowing.  
The rest were far too occupied with haying  
Or pulling beets or scrubbing floors or sewing  
To stop and hear what Gabriel was saying.  
"Prepare!" he called, his urgency grown greater,  
"Doomsday! Doomsday! Doomsday!" But no one  
          heeded

(They had no time for trivial news till later),  
No one. He cupped his hands. He railed. He pleaded.  
He roared until his holy features reddened,  
Crying to rouse the dead. . . . Then he succeeded.  
The dogs of Switzerland, like one dog maddened,  
Flew at his heels and snapped, till Gabriel straightway  
(His errand done, his message given) departed  
In uncelestial haste behind the gateway.  
By now ten thousand spectral throats were started,  
And out of moldy barns and bones unburied  
Came ghostly howls and yammerings and bellows.  
And not one voice but broke its leash and hurried  
To spread the hideous rumor to its fellows,  
Who, knowing tales more terrible, grew jealous  
And answered back, and bayed, and whined, and worried,  
Barking the frightened echoes up the hill.

Since then, no dog in Weggis has been still.

## TOWARD THE KULM

What is there in a mountain  
To lift the heart high?  
Nothing but earth that stretches  
Into a dangerous sky,  
Nothing but bowlders balanced  
In reckless masonry.

Nothing to heal the spirit  
But a cloud in retarded flight,  
A hemmed-in path that struggles  
To reach unshadowed light.  
Nothing but space and silence  
And height that calls to height.

## ASH WEDNESDAY

(*Vienna*)

### I

Shut out the light or let it filter through  
These frowning aisles as penitentially  
As though it walked in sackcloth. Let it be  
Laid at the feet of all that ever grew  
Twisted and false, like this rococo shrine  
Where cupids smirk from candy clouds and where  
The Lord, with polished nails and perfumed hair,  
Performs a parody of the divine.

The candles hiss; the organ-pedals storm;  
Writhing and dark, the columns leave the earth  
To find a lonelier and darker height.  
The church grows dingy while the human swarm  
Struggles against the impenitent body's mirth.  
Ashes to ashes. . . . Go. . . . Shut out the light.

(*Hinterbrühl*)

II

And so the light runs laughing from the town,  
Pulling the sun with him along the roads  
That shed their muddy rivers as he goads  
Each blade of grass the ice had flattened down.  
At every empty bush he stops to fling  
Handfuls of birds with green and yellow throats;  
While even the hens, uncertain of their notes,  
Stir rusty vowels in attempts to sing.

He daubs the chestnut-tips with sudden reds  
And throws an olive blush on naked hills  
That hoped, somehow, to keep themselves in white.  
Who calls for sackcloth now? He leaps and spreads  
A carnival of color, gladly spills  
His blood: the resurrection—and the light.

## SCHUBERT AT HÖLDRICHSMÜHLE

These mountains seem to hold themselves so high  
Because they think to keep his secret still.  
But so does every little scrubby hill  
And path that had to stretch to let him by.  
Romantic to the last, the vineyards sigh  
A placid summer sigh, and even the mill  
Allows itself a reminiscent thrill,  
Gazing upon a sentimental sky.

And there he sat, drinking the country beer,  
Placing these dots on paper, while his friends  
Made the trite jokes about the war and weather.  
Good-humored chaff, a round or two. . . .

And here,  
Ascending in a cry that never ends,  
Thunder and lark sing radiantly together.

## IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

*(London-Paris)*

Black above the world  
It flies  
Like an anger  
In the skies.

Seven years it cursed  
The light;  
Horror of a  
Nameless night.

Now the triple engine  
Roars;  
And travelers (as a  
Matter of course)

Eat their lunch and  
Do not see  
The earth's involved  
Geometry.

To them the world below  
Is some  
Pattern of  
Linoleum

To watch an hour or so  
With eyes  
Dead to distance  
Or surprise,

Save (turning to their papers)  
When  
They read  
The franc has fallen again.



## SHANTY BROOK

*(For Jim and Bess)*

Here where the last long hill withdraws  
Into a monotone of gauze  
And night and day is nothing else  
But an arrangement of pastels,  
Where the discarded trout-stream goes  
To chatter with the arguing crows,  
All that the world is waiting for  
Comes, like a wild thing, to your door.

Each lisping poplar bears good news  
And even the most reticent spruce  
Has more to say. Conviction grows  
Out of the quiet ground that knows  
How pure, above a roaring age,  
Your thought has made this hermitage  
Where the bound foot is free to roam  
And homelessness can be at home.

## PROGRESSIVE RUIN

Pollius desires a gateway

For his villa. . . . And the block  
Lifts a stolid flank and straightway  
Rises humbly from the rock.

Lombardy demands a cloister

To commemorate a saint. . . .  
And the rock that knows its master  
Wears a brighter coat of paint.

Borgia plans a garden growing

Out of stone, an ancient grot. . . .  
And the rock obliges, knowing  
Times may change but time does not.

Naples calls for more efficient

Pavement and for smoother stones. . . .  
And the shifted rock is patient,  
Turning on its tireless bones.

Earth grows skyward; earth grows prouder;

Earth grows more inclined to mock.  
Then, one day, a fine, thin powder. . . .  
And the rock returns to rock.

## SIX BOOK REVIEWS



## CRITIQUE OF PURE RHYME

Finished and flawless,  
Crisply designed,  
Here is the aweless  
Breath of the mind.  
Light without glamor  
Illumines this world;  
Chisel and hammer  
Shape all these curled  
Odorless petals,  
Keen, cutting fronds,  
Into bright metals  
Harder than bronze.  
Thin as old glass  
Still undemolished,  
Even the grass  
Is painted and polished,  
Spun out and waved,  
Carefully counted,  
Lacquered, engraved,  
And finally mounted  
With so many millions  
Of jewels for color  
That even the brilliance  
Grows duller and duller.  
Rhyme, like a shutter,  
Claps through the words.

Mechanical birds  
    Woodenly flutter.  
Clouds of pale cardboard  
    Creak through the sky;  
While with a hard, bored  
    Baffled eye,  
We turn from these mobile  
    Toys that are offered,  
Seeking a noble  
    Phrase that has suffered.  
But in this airless  
    Vacuum  
Nothing so careless  
    Can ever come.  
Never a burden,  
    A cry or a curse,  
Can hope to be heard in  
    This crackling verse.  
Its one endeavor  
    Is to be smooth;  
Hard and clever,  
    Its highest truth.  
Without a blunder,  
    It stiffens and dies—  
What might have been wonder  
    Is scarcely surprise.

## A SONNET SEQUENCE

Here Rhetoric in tatters beats its breast,  
And calls upon the bugles to intone  
Pompous profundities that have been blown  
By countless other trumpets, long at rest.  
Here Eloquence is but an actor, dressed  
In faded fustian on a tinsel throne,  
Mouthing his climax: "Oh thou . . . great . . . alone . . .  
Vast . . . immemorial . . . Beauty . . . unexpressed."

And while the sound disturbs indifferent air,  
Invoking Glamour in its grandiose moods,  
The summoned spirit enters; blare on blare  
Ushers in Old Solemnity, while broods  
Of hoary metaphors reveal him there  
In patches torn from purple platitudes.

## A VOLUME OF LYRICS

With a voice as cool and plain  
As a blackbird's after rain,  
On a slender spray of tone,  
Arch immensities are thrown.

Sorrow sprawling through the street  
Is a catch for tinkling feet;  
Love and pain are words that pass  
Like rhymed shadows on the grass.

Passion executes a bright  
Endless pirouette, as light  
As suffering whose accents make  
The mind glad that the heart can break.

Life, with a complacent smile,  
Chirps a bird-like measure, while  
Even Death is taught to go  
To the tune of heel-and-toe.



## A GEORGIAN ANTHOLOGY

Never was landscape quite so clipped and callow  
As this between these pale bucolic covers;  
On these smooth lawns the water-color lovers  
Stray through the copse where kine and crocus follow.  
And elms—elms lonely, leaning, haunted, hollow—  
Are packed with thrushes, wrens and wheeling plovers  
As, over every sprig of thyme, there hovers  
At least one curlew or nostalgic swallow.

Here, far beyond the reach of life or trams,  
A world composed of ever-verdant vales  
Is thick with adjectives and thrice-told tales,  
Blackbirds and buttercups and gentle dams;  
While, from the hawthorn, immemorial lambs  
Keep moonlit trysts with deathless nightingales.

## “ WORDS, WORDS, WORDS ”

O, will there be no stop to men parading  
Their every pang and turning blood to ink?  
Can no one have a grief without degrading  
Sorrow with syntax, no one even think  
A casual thought without the wish to blazon  
In four-inch rhetoric the weakest verb?  
Can no one dream or climb a hill or gaze on  
A sunset and not wish to write a blurb?

Come, let us put an end to publishing;  
Burn up the galleys and melt down the plates.  
Destroy the type and turn from everything  
That deals with marketable loves and hates.  
Adam survived unparadisal winters  
Without the aid of paper, press or printers.

## SONG TOURNAMENT: NEW STYLE

Rain, said the first, as it falls in Venice  
Is like the dropping of golden pennies  
Into a sea as smooth and bright  
As a bowl of curdled malachite.

Storm, sang the next, in the streets of Peking  
Is like the ghost of a yellow sea-king,  
Scooping the dust to find if he may  
Discover what earth has hidden away.

The mist, sighed the third, that lies on London  
Is the wraith of Beauty, betrayed and undone  
By a world of dark machines that plan  
To splinter the shaken soul of man.

The rush of Spring, smiled the fourth, in Florence  
Is wave upon wave of laughing torrents,  
A flood of birds, a water-voiced calling,  
A green rain rising instead of falling.

The wind, cried the fifth, in the Bay of Naples  
Is a quarrel of leaves among the maples,  
A war of sunbeams idly fanned,  
A whisper softer than sand on sand.

Then spoke the last: God's endless tears,  
Too great for Heaven, anoint the spheres,

While every drop becomes a well  
In the fathomless, thirsting heart of Hell.

And thus six bards, who could boast of travel  
Fifty miles from their native gravel,  
Rose in the sunlight and offered their stanzas  
At the shrine of the Poetry Contest in Kansas.

APOCRYPHAL SOLILOQUIES



## GOLIATH AND DAVID

### GOLIATH

See the dazzled stripling stand,  
Naked as an empty hand.  
And here am I, a clanking mass  
Blotting out the yellow grass  
With a body only sent  
For the world's astonishment :  
Arms as great as monstrous boughs  
Where no bird would dare to house,  
Fingers like some poisonous growth  
Even jungle-beasts must loathe,  
And a goggling head awry  
Like a black moon in the sky. . .  
Here I wait, uneagerly  
For the child that faces me,  
Frightened by my length of limb—  
And the clean, young grace of him  
Unaware that cheek and brow  
Taste their last of sunlight now.  
Oh, that it were I, not he!  
Oh, that God would take from me  
This power only schooled in harm  
And send it through that puny arm  
With such a fire that it might well  
Break through this hugely rotting shell. . .  
But there will be no miracle.

There is no help. Young David, fly!  
I am destruction's demon, aye,  
Too sick to live, too strong to die.

DAVID

And there he looms, no more defiant  
Than any hill. So that's a giant!  
This is the thing that should alarm me  
More than the sight of hell's own army  
Commanded by its master devil.  
But this—why this is nothing evil!  
Its eyes are cow's eyes, it looks civil,  
A thing that only babes could fear.  
Yet I—what am I doing here?  
What part have I, the least of shepherds,  
Among these hungry spears and scabbards?  
What! Have I tended sheep and cattle  
Only to lead the wolves to battle?  
Am I possessed of howling demons  
That I should seek the blood of humans?  
God, take this madness out of me.  
Give me my pastures, let me be—  
Far from this clash of words and weapons—  
Where nothing cries and little happens  
Save when a star leaps from the heavens  
Or a new rush of song enlivens  
The heart that beats in balanced measures,  
Unshaken by more passionate seizures.



See, I will fling this silly pebble  
Away from me to end my trouble  
And pluck harp-strings again till they  
Charm every darker thought away. . .  
Come, old Goliath, come and play!

## CAIN

O Man that would  
Be molded anew,  
Obey the blood  
That burns for you.

When the flame roars,  
Too long oppressed,  
I am the force  
Within your fist.

White as a young boy's  
Indignation,  
I am the passion  
In your voice.

Upon the hordes  
Fattened in sloth,  
I bring the Lord's  
Most righteous wrath.

For what I was  
And what I am  
Springs from a cause  
Too bright for blame.

Against a world  
Of unctuous Abels,  
My sons are hurled,  
A race of rebels.

Never will they  
Cringe to the rulers;  
They will make play  
Of kingdoms and dollars.

No ground too sacred;  
No wall too stout;  
But, with an acrid  
Laugh in the throat,

Still will they surge  
Within the temple,  
Swinging an ample  
Whip for a scourge,

Though the world pleases  
To press again  
On the bow of Jesus  
The brand of Cain.

## ISAAC

Will it be always nightmare, always fever,  
Now and hereafter?  
Will nothing stop the currents running ever  
Darker and swifter?

Let me forget. . . . It happened in my boyhood.  
We rose up early,  
Saddled the ass, took fire, and split the gray wood.  
The dawn broke clearly.

Two days of level roads. And then toward sunset,  
The country differing,  
We piled the resinous wood before night's onset  
For a burnt offering.

And he, my patriarch father, knelt beside me;  
His face was graver  
In the long shadows. And a fear betrayed me  
Then and forever.

And into arms too mighty to be shaken  
I ran for shelter. . .  
The ropes were knotted. I lay bound and stricken  
Upon the altar.

I watched a little flame run up and onward.  
I saw him gather  
All power in one body. A knife flashed downward.  
*It was my father.*

. . . . .  
Will it be always nightmare, always fever,  
Now and hereafter?  
Will nothing stop the currents running ever  
Darker and swifter?

## KOHELETH

I waited and worked  
To win myself leisure,  
Till loneliness irked  
And I turned to raw pleasure.

I drank and I gamed,  
I feasted and wasted,  
Till, sick and ashamed,  
The food stood untasted.

I searched in the Book  
For rooted convictions,  
Till the badgered brain shook  
With its own contradictions.

Then, done with the speech,  
Of the foolishly lettered,  
I started to teach  
Life cannot be bettered:

That the warrior fails  
Whatever his weapon,  
And nothing avails  
While time and chance happen.

That fools who assure men  
With lies are respected,  
While the vision of pure men  
Is scorned and rejected.

That a wise man goes grieving  
Even in Zion,  
While any dog living  
Outroars a dead lion.

## HOLOFERNES

I have seen God at last; have seen him stand  
Naked, a burning woman, from whose hand,  
Still shaped for love, destruction spoke. . . .

Now I

Who fought Death off the field, am glad to die.  
This is completion; this is what I thought  
To find beneath all passion, this I sought  
In women—women eager, casual, bought—  
And never found. To die upon the breast  
Of pain and cleave the world in one deep thrust,  
Spending the last drop till there's no more giving.  
But where was that fulfilment for my craving?  
Always I faltered backward from the gulf,  
Too much in love with self to give myself  
Completely to the depths beyond all saving.  
But now, now in the midst of fear and famine,  
Plenty—and peace. This dark and secret woman  
Has brought release beyond all hope or human  
Sharing of flesh. And I, the unbeliever,  
Hail Death, the last denial, as my saviour.  
Peace after passion. . . Slow surrender. . . Rest. . .  
The washing of great tides within my breast. . .

Hands off, you fools, you cannot hold Death fast!  
Let Judith go. I have seen God at last.



## JEWISH LULLABY

Husha, O husha,  
And lull-lullaby;  
No mother in Russia  
Is prouder than I.  
You stumble no longer,  
Soon you will run,  
And you will grow stronger  
Than Samson, my son.

You will be famous,  
Your thoughts will go wide;  
Isaiah and Amos  
Will walk at your side.  
Your words will be graven  
On metal and stone;  
And the Great Ones in Heaven  
Will envy my son.



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BY ROCKWELL KENT.









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